

Pastoral Message on Human Right Day Celebration by the Catholic Church in Thailand



Sunday 15th November 2015

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To All Christians,

The celebration of Human Rights Day by the Catholic Church in Thailand on the 15th of November 2015, is timely appropriate to invite all Christians to the call of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, to respond to the ever critical natural phenomena, which yield adverse effects on the environment, agriculture, economic security, livelihood and health of the people. They are also the main factors currently worsening poverty of the people much further.

It is widely known that in the past decade the change in the nature and the environment occurred at a very fast pace. The consequences of this change of climate globally, such as, prolong summer, thunderstorm, cyclone and typhoon, the phenomena of El Niño and La Niña, and so on, have been ever more severe following the climate variability, and they seriously affects farming and fishery, resulted in insufficient food for domestic consumption. Coastal aquatic animals and marine life are fragile to extinction, and new and recurrent diseases are widely spread in various parts of the world and Thailand. People at the lower strata of society are the ones who are directly affected by these natural disasters.

These disasters, manmade and natural, are the ecological crises closely linked with what we call 'modern development', and impacts of the moral relationship in which human beings do not respect their fellow human beings anymore. Humans do not take care of the creation as willed by God, which is the mission He has entrusted to them since the beginning of the Creation. If the nature and the environment are damaged because of irresponsible human behaviours, social environment is also wounded¹. It is a serious threat to the right to livelihood of all humanity, especially the access to all basic needs, which is the basic human right and an essential element of the authentic human development.

¹ Pope Benedict XVI, Message on World Day of Peace 2010

The Second Vatican Council teaches us that ‘God wills the world and anything in it for the use by each human being and all the peoples’ because it is the common heritage of all. What is in the world is for the benefit of all. It is our common home², the home that we all inherit.

Given the richness of the whole creation, which our ancestors have done their mission of “Care and Protection” of the creation (Gen 1:28 and 2:15), therefore, the Catholic Church in Thailand, through its Episcopal Office for Social Works, is fully aware of the responsibility of Thai Christians. This responsibility is part of the process of conversion, change of one’s life and renewal of ecological relationship by respecting the moral principles and faith among human beings, and between human beings and the environment, in the fulfilling of commitment to the mission of redressing climate change, which is the urgent problem in our time.


With this responsibility and gratitude, Christians should opt for simplistic lifestyle with disciplines. They should have a genuine effort to stop their behaviours of waste, which is currently influencing our daily life from dawn to dusk, which can be done by reducing, avoiding and stopping or rejecting extravagant or durable materials; reducing waste and use of chemicals to avoid contamination in rivers; and turning to recyclable materials, travel with energy saving vehicles or use of alternative energies; growing plants to increase humidity in the soil and abstaining from destroying food chain of all living creatures. These behaviours must be lived their daily life as their sacrifice and concern for others, which is the genuine spirituality. It is also the observance of the essential principle that all must have access to basic needs necessary for their happy living with the same human dignity. This is the inevitable ecological relationship among all human beings and between human beings and the nature.

To be in communion with the Universal Church who is concerned on the severity of the climate change, I call upon all Christians to take action without delay, with a confidence that concrete lifestyle of each individual person in their own context, family, school, workplace, different professions and community, all could be the significant power that would lead to restoration and renewal of the environment and the climate. We cannot be indifferent anymore. This is an opportune time to be close with God by consciously and respectfully correcting and renewing

² Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, no. 3, 2015

relationship with the nature and the environment, with brothers and sisters, and with the Living God.

May our Lord Jesus Christ grant abundant blessings to all of you who are the builders and caretaker of Justice and Peace.



Bishop Philip Banchong Chaiyara
Chairperson

Justice Department (CCJP) of the Episcopal Office for Social Works (Caritas Thailand)
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114 (2492) Prachasongkroh 24

Dindaeng, Bangkok 10400

Tel: 0-2277-4625, 0-2275-7783, Fax: 0-2692-4150

www.jpthai.org/jpthai@jpthai.org

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